

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 08755 131035Z

21

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3838

INFO SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

CINCPAC PRIORITY

S E C R E T SEOUL 8755

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, KS, US

SUBJ: ROK FORCES IMPROVEMENT PLAN (FIP)

1. AT SECURITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IN LATE AUGUST, DEFMIN SUH UNVEILED ROKG FIVE-YEAR FORCES IMPROVEMENT PLAN (FIP). SECDEF SCHLESINGER ASSURED ROKG THAT WE WOULD STUDY FIP CAREFULLY WITH VIEW TO DETERMINING WAYS IN WHICH WE MIGHT SUPPORT IT, AND ROKG IS AWAITING OUR RESPONSE.

2. ALL INDICATIONS - INCLUDING IMPOSITION OF SPECIAL DEFENSE SURTAX - POINT TO FACT ROKG IS DETERMINED TO IMPLEMENT PLAN AND REGARDS IT AS APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO CONDITIONS AND PRESSURES WHICH NOW DETERMINE US SECURITY POLICY IN NORTHEAST ASIA. FROM US POINT OF VIEW, KOREAN DETERMINATION TO ACHIEVE GREATER DEGREE OF SELF-RELIANCE THROUGH FIP SHOULD BE SUPPORTED. IT OFFERS MEANS OF MAINTAINING NECESSARY DETERRENT POSTURE AGAINST NORTH KOREAN AGGRESSION LARGELY THROUGH KOREA'S OWN EFFORTS WHILE PROMISING GREATER DEGREE OF FLEXIBILITY FOR FUTURE IN DEPLOYMENT US FORCES.

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PAGE 02 SEOUL 08755 131035Z

3. COUNTRY TEAM HAS CONDUCTED THROUGH ANALYSIS OF

FIP IN CLOSE CONSULTATION WITH SENIOR ROK DEFENSE AND ECONOMIC OFFICIALS. ADDRESSEE POSTS SHORTLY WILL BE RECEIVING SERIES OF THREE TELEGRAMS ANALYZING PLAN IN TERMS OF WEAPONS SYSTEMS REQUIREMENTS AND PRIORITIES, COSTS AND FINANCING REQUIRED, ABILITY OF ROK ECONOMY TO ABSORB ADDED BURDEN, AND POLICY FACTORS INVOLVED.

4. WHILE OUR ANALYSIS REVEALS SOME DIFFERENCES WITH FIP AS PRESENTED, WE BELIEVE THAT WITH MODIFICATIONS, WHICH OUR ANALYSIS WILL SUGGEST, IT REPRESENTS MILITARILY JUSTIFIABLE AND ECONOMICALLY FEASIBLE COURSE OF ACTION FOR ROKG WHICH IT IS IN US NATIONAL INTEREST TO SUPPORT. WE ARE PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED BY FACT THAT ROKG, IN FORMULATING PLAN WHICH WILL REPRESENT SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN BUDGETARY AND FOREIGN EXCHANGE OUTLAYS, IS RELYING ON U.S. NOT FOR GRANT AID, BUT FOR ASSISTANCE THROUGH FMS GUARANTEED CREDITS WITH WHICH TO PURCHASE INVESTMENT ITEMS. IN ESSENCE THEN, PLAN REPRESENTS MAJOR EFFORT BY ROKG TO PRESERVE US/ROK RELATIONSHIP BY ESTABLISHING THAT, UNLIKE VIETNAM, ROKG IS CAPABLE AND WILLING TO ASSUME PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR OWN SECURITY AT MINIMUM REAL COST TO US TAXPAYER.

5. I URGE VERY CAREFUL HIGH-LEVEL CONSIDERATION OF US POSITION IN SUPPORT OF FIP. I NEED NOT EMPHASIZE THAT US POLICY ON THIS QUESTION TRANSCENDS PURELY QUESTION OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE AND GOES TO HEART OF OUR RELATIONS WITH ROKG AND FUNDAMENTAL INTERESTS IN NORTHEAST ASIA. FURTHERMORE, A POSITIVE RESPONSE WILL OFFER US IMPORTANT LEVERAGE ON OTHER TROUBLESOME POLICY QUESTIONS WITH ROKG.

6. BECAUSE OF IMPORTANCE WHICH PLAN ASSUMES, I WOULD LIKE TO SEND DCM RICHARD A. ERICSON, JR., AND MAJ. GEN. OLIVER D. STREET, CHIEF JUSMAG/K, TO WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS FIP AND OUR ANALYSIS WITH INTERESTED WASHINGTON AGENCIES. ASSUMING DEPARTMENT CONCURS, ERICSON AND STREET WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR CONSULTATION ON THIS SUBJECT IN WASHINGTON FROM NOV 28 THROUGH

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PAGE 03 SEOUL 08755 131035Z

FOLLOWING WEEK.
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